American Studies 8

Course Overview: What is American Studies 8 all about?
The 8th grade American Studies curriculum is about the continuum of American history as studied through the lens of the U.S. Constitution. What does it mean to be an American? How has that changed over time? (about the images, American Precision Museum, Windsor VT)

Units and Activities: What will we be learning about and doing in this course?
How does the American identity take shape? What makes America great? What challenges do we face as Americans today? We will explore change, continuity, and context through time and space, examining cause-and-effect relationships between major transformative events in American history and the social, economic, and cultural factors involved. Ties to current events figure strongly in every unit. Units include:

- **Foundations**: Who are we as a nation? (U.S. Constitution, Vermont Statehood, American art and literature)
- **Becoming a World Power**: Is war necessary? (economics, immigration)
- **Social Justice**: Our Rights and Responsibilities

Classwork will include Socratic Dialogue, writing, collaborative explorations (within COVID protocols), guest speakers (Zoom), independent choice projects, quizzes.

Standards: What knowledge and skills will I gain by the end of this course?

This course will assess the knowledge and skills students build in key Anchor Standards and Content Standards.
Anchor Standards: Students will have multiple opportunities to show their proficiency in each Anchor Standard. “I can...” statements follow as descriptors for each Anchor Standard that will be assessed. 

Sourcing: I can... gather, evaluate, integrate, and cite information and evidence presented in diverse formats; evaluate various explanations in order to make informed decisions to solve problems 

Taking Action: I can... assess and present adaptations of arguments and explanations for individual and collective action 

Arguing and Explaining: I can... construct arguments by evaluating and using evidence from multiple sources 

Speaking and Listening: I can... initiate and participate in a range of collaborative discussions; make strategic use of digital media to enhance understanding

Course Standards: This course builds student content knowledge and skills and using the C3 Standards for Global Citizenship that were adopted by the Vermont Agency of Education in 2017, and the National Council for the Social Studies 10 Themes. The course standards for American Studies 8 include:

- **Civics**: Understanding the historical development of structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary U.S. society and other parts of the world is essential for developing civic competence.
- **Economics**: People have wants and needs that often exceed the resources available to them, and societies have evolved a variety of ways to respond. The realities of global interdependence require understanding the increasingly important and diverse global connections among world societies and the frequent tension between national interests and global priorities.
- **Geography**: The study of people, places, and human-environment interactions assists students as they create their spatial views and geographic perspectives of the world beyond their personal locations.
- **History**: What are the common characteristics of different cultures? How did belief systems, such as religion or political ideals evolve and influence other parts of the culture? What are the transformative events that signaled major culture change to accommodate different ideas and beliefs? What can we learn from these things to inform how we move forward in positive and constructive ways today?

Assessment of Learning

Three types of assessments will be used to determine if you have gained the necessary knowledge and skills of this course: Formative Assessments, Summative Assessments, and Habits of Work for Learning. The grade in this course will be based on Formative & Summative Scores (95%) and HOWLs (5%). For more info about assessment types, scoring, and overall grade calculation, please click here.

Materials:
Students should come to class prepared with a notebook, binder or folder for organizing papers, a pen or pencil, and their Chromebook.

**Schoolwide Procedures:**
Please see the Student Handbook for Procedures and Policies related to: Due dates and deadlines, extra credit, retaking assessments, and turnaround time for grade entry. Please see health and safety guidelines for COVID protocols.

**Classroom Expectations:**
Students are expected to arrive with open minds, be prepared to challenge their own thinking, practice challenging others thoughtfully and respectfully, and engage in all class activities and discussions.